

HEADQUARTERS BROWNSVILLE DISTRICT
Brownsville, Texas.

January 24, 1917.

From: District Commander.

To: Commanding General, Southern Department,
Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Subject: Report of instruction of National Guard troops.

Referring to letter from Headquarters Southern Department of January 11, 1917, enclosing a letter from the Secretary of War, and calling for a report on the instruction of the National Guard for the past six months, I make the following report:

It was realized from the first that in order to make these troops ready for service in the field extreme measures were necessary. They contained a large number of recruits and a great many inexperienced officers. Their training had been limited to a small amount of barrack drill, with no field instruction. They required intensive training.

The first troops to arrive here were the First Brigade of Texas infantry, including headquarters, two regiments of infantry, one battery of field artillery and one field hospital. For purposes of instruction and also for protection of the Valley, they were distributed by battalions at stations occupied by regular troops, namely at San Benito, Harlingen, Mercedes, Pharr, McAllen and Mission, with detached companies at Sam Fordyce and Fort Ringgold.

Before the arrival of these troops at these stations their camps were laid out, wood, water and forage were provided, and local commanders of regular troops stationed at those places were ordered to detail officers and noncommissioned officers for their training, which commenced within two days of their arrival, special emphasis being placed on target practice. The schedule of instruction prescribed by G.O., No. 8, Hq. Texas Brigade (copy herewith) consisted of seven hours and fifteen minutes drill and target practice per day for enlisted men, and three hours officers' school. This was afterwards shortened, in compliance with a telegram from your Headquarters, to four hours drill under arms and two hours other instruction.

In order to obtain uniformity in the various commands, Major L. F. Kilbourne, 26th Infantry, was detailed as Officer in Charge of Militia Instruction. To train the Texas troops, seventeen officers and thirty noncommissioned officers of the 26th and 28th Infantry and one officer and two noncommissioned officers of Battery D, 5th Field Artillery were detailed, in addition to their regular duties, as instructors of militia by the local commanders. Included in these